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History of Federal Drought Relief Programs

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ABSTRACT

Federal drought relief has had an increasingly important role in the 20th century in contrast to earlier years when the Government assumed no responsibility. A variety of programs has been used, especially in the severe drought years of the 1930s, 1950s, and 1980s. Beginning in the 1930s, Federal aid emphasized emergency loans, purchases, and subsidies. Since 1974, the Government has often used direct disaster payment programs, which have greatly increased expenditures. Federal crop insurance, which has existed for 50 years, has never played a major role, but proposals in the next farm bill may require participants in commodity programs to buy crop insurance.

Keywords: Drought, crop loss, legislation, emergency loans, livestock assistance, disaster payments, crop insurance.

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INTRODUCTION

Government relief for farmers hurt by drought takes many forms as demonstrated by administration and congressional actions during the 1988 drought. The broad assistance provided may generate proposals in the next farm bill to require farmers who participate in Federal commodity programs to purchase crop insurance. This report details the historical growth of Government drought aid, a history with an abortive start in 1887.

19TH CENTURY

Drought relief was not seen as a Federal responsibility in the 19th century. In 1887, Congress appropriated $10,000 to provide seeds for drought-stricken Texas, but President Grover Cleveland vetoed the bill, arguing that the Government had neither the power nor the duty to relieve suffering and that paternalism weakened character. People, he stated, support the government, but the government should not support people.

EARLY 20TH CENTURY

The Federal Government made its first drought disaster loans to farmers during the wartime emergency in 1918. President Woodrow Wilson authorized transfer of $5 million to the Treasury and Agriculture departments for seed loans to farmers in the Northwest and Southwest who had lost two successive wheat crops to drought and winterkill. The program continued in 1919. Appropriations acts allocated $2 million in 1921 and $1.5 million in 1922 for seed loans to five western States. Farmers in New Mexico received loans of $1 million for both seed and feed in 1924.

Herbert Hoover's administration (1929-33) saw a great expansion in Federal expenditures for drought relief. USDA made 45,000 feed and seed loans totaling $5 million both in 1929 and in 1930. After passage of the Drought Relief Act of 1930, the number of loans for feed, seed, fertilizer, and fuel skyrocketed to 439,000 and amounted to $56 million in 1931. During Hoover's last year, 1932, the number and amount climbed to 508,000 and $64 million. Despite this dramatic growth, Hoover reaped a great deal of political resentment among many farmers who could not meet the insistent demands for repayment at a time of plummeting commodity prices.

THE NEW DEAL YEARS

The first extensive programs for drought relief came during the Roosevelt administration (1933-45). The dry, hot years of the early 1930s persisted through much of the rest of the decade. Conditions in 1934 and 1936 were particularly severe. Since the Nation was enduring the worst depression in history, drought relief programs were almost inextricably mixed with those for economic recovery and political reform.

Three agencies were intimately involved with drought relief: USDA (especially the new Agricultural Adjustment Administration--AAA), the Farm Credit Administration (FCA), and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA, which became the Works Progress Administration--WPA--after 1935). Significant programs began in the late spring of 1934. An interagency Drought Relief Service was in charge of the work (both the name and the makeup of this group varied from time to time).

State and local advisory committees as well as independent investigators made recommendations to the group in Washington. In 1934, for example, a total of 1,457 counties in every State west of the Mississippi, except Washington, plus Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan, were designated as drought-stricken. Two years later, the total was 1,194 counties in 25 States. After a county went on the disaster list, it became eligible for a variety of programs such as direct work relief, livestock purchase, seed and feed loans or grants, conservation procedures, modification of AAA contracts, and reduction of railroad rates.

Work programs, administered by FERA and later by WPA, were drought-relief measures to the extent that they provided money for hard-hit farmers and rural laborers who might have had no income otherwise. Needy families also got grants from relief agencies for feed and seed. FCA allocated considerable funds to make feed and seed loans to the more substantial farmers who could not borrow from regular commercial sources.

The primary intent of the livestock-purchase program (which included sheep and goats but not hogs) was to buy animals which farmers and ranchers could not feed adequately. Farmers got fair returns, and packers processed a substantial portion of the meat for distribution to the poor and unemployed. The program had several important side effects. The purchase of 8.3 million head in 1934 contributed to a rise in market price for the remainder. In addition, since producers consciously chose their culls for sale to the Government, herd quality probably rose. Two years later, a considerably less extensive purchase program kept market prices stable until late season rains let western farmers hold their cattle on the range. An important, although much smaller, cattle-purchase program aimed at the elimination of animals with tuberculosis and Bang's disease.

Cattle raisers also benefited from other drought programs. AAA modified contracts, under which farmers had taken cropland out of production, and allowed production of forage crops. Railroads modified tariffs to charge 50 percent of normal for shipment of hay into drought areas, two-thirds for similar shipment of feed grains, and two-thirds for shipment of cattle to more hospitable grazing areas.

Conservation measures formed a final aspect of drought relief in the 1930s. The young men of the Civilian Conservation Corps labored extensively in drought-stricken regions during the New Deal era. A number of national leaders also believed that substantial amounts of marginal land, often hit first and worst by droughts, should be retired. In 1934, FERA spent more than $53 million to buy

such land. The Resettlement Administration continued purchases later, but Rexford Tugwell, its head, discovered that truly large-scale retirement was politically unfeasible.

One observer has estimated that Federal expenditures for drought relief, mainly loans, purchases, and subsidies rather than grants, amounted to no more than $1 billion between 1933 and 1937, and this included such items as $1 million for beetle eradication in 1934.

In 1936, President Roosevelt appointed an interagency committee to investigate the practicability of crop insurance. The report was favorable, and Congress authorized the establishment of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) in Title V of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938. The intent of the legislation was to let farmers protect themselves from losses caused by any of a series of natural disasters. It came too late, however, to have any effect on the droughts of the 1930s. Between 1939 and 1947, a time of generally good weather, the FCIC program not only lost money but also proved less than attractive to a majority of farmers. Congress continued it after 1947 on a greatly reduced basis.

THE 1950s

The 1940s had been a favorable decade for American agriculture, but drought began on a small scale in the Southwest about 1950. The dry conditions had spread by 1953 and became a major concern between that year and 1958.

Those who formulated drought-relief programs for the 1950s did not face the extra burden of a devastating depression, and the Korean War, ending July 27, 1953, did not seem to affect decisionmaking. The programs themselves were based on a number of laws, some of which dated back to the New Deal but most passed to deal with actual or potential disasters of the time. A particularly important piece of legislation was PL 81-875, approved in 1950 when the fear of atomic warfare was widespread. It gave the President power to declare major disaster areas and exert sweeping powers, thereafter, including use of an emergency fund. The act became the cornerstone of several drought-relief programs. The principal measures aimed at drought relief in this period included production disaster loans, economic disaster loans, special livestock loans, and programs for emergency feed, emergency hay, soil erosion, and beef purchase.

The Secretary of Agriculture could make production disaster loans, under authorization of PL 81-38 (passed in 1949 after a series of damaging blizzards), to farmers and stockmen for any agricultural purpose in any region where he ruled that such conditions as drought, floods, hail, or tornadoes destroyed crops. If he found that producers could not readily obtain funds from commercial sources, he could draw on his disaster loan revolving fund, originallyestablished under the Farm Credit Act of 1933 and transferred to his direct control by PL 81-38.

Economic disaster loans originated one step higher. Before these funds could be released, a governor had to petition the President who then could proclaim the State a disaster area, under authority of PL 81-875 (1950). If the problem was an agricultural one, the Secretary was in charge and designated disaster counties after carefully sifting reports and investigating. Thereafter, the loans were granted, authorized by PL 81-38 as amended by PL 83-115 (1953), in a fashion similar to those for production disaster and their source was the same revolving

fund. Both of these kinds of loans were granted after consultation with previous lenders, and they could be used to pay interest on prior commercial debts.

Some programs were aimed particularly at livestock producers because they were often harder hit than other farmers by the droughts of the 1950s. Beginning on July 14, 1953, established producers and feeders (but not feedlots) of cattle, sheep, and goats became eligible for loans during a 2-year period. These special loans of $2,500 or more were repayable over 3 years at 5-percent interest. The funds came from the Secretary's disaster loan revolving fund, as authorized by PL 81-38 amended by PL 83-115.

The Secretary also had authority under PL 81-38 and PL 83-115 to furnish feed to established farmers, ranchers, and stockmen after the President had proclaimed disaster areas under PL 81-875. Prior to 1954, local committees allocated feed from Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) stocks. Thereafter, farmers received orders worth 60 cents a hundredweight to subsidize their purchases of approved feed from local suppliers, who were, in turn, reimbursed out of CCC stocks. The Secretary could also authorize furnishing seeds under this program. The Eisenhower administration stressed that no funds were involved in this process. CCC was reimbursed under section 301 of the newly passed PL 83-480, the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954.

Another measure of drought relief available under PL 81-875 was the emergency hay program. This program, which drew funds from the President's emergency fund to split with the States, affected the cost of transporting hay to drought areas. In addition, railroads cut rates for hauling hay to these areas.

In order to prevent wind erosion, both the Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP) and the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) stepped up their efforts. ACP authorized the use of regular funds to share the cost of protective tillage and for planting enduring protective cover crops in wind-erosion areas. SCS employees provided special advice for both short- and long-term protection in drought areas. In March 1954, USDA authorized the use of up to $2.5 million from the President's emergency fund for wind-erosion control programs by local governments on a reimbursable basis.

The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation operated on a limited basis during the 1950s and did not play a major role in drought relief. The President also had authority under the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 as amended to purchase beef. Although the Secretary continually monitored the cattle situation, the program was kept on standby.

The drought programs of the 1950s were coordinated by the Secretary's drought committee, assisted by State and local committees. They drew on the services of Extension, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation, Soil Conservation, Civil Defense, and others. Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) personnel administered the various loan, hay, and feed programs. From the beginning of FY 1953 until February 28, 1957, the President had declared 33 States as disaster areas. One estimate placed the cost of drought relief programs during this period at $550 million.

RECENT YEARS TO 1988

The Nation has had several agricultural droughts in recent years. The most significant and widespread, prior to 1988, was in 1983. Relief programs have largely been based on earlier experience but with a periodic shift in emphasis

from loans to direct payments in 1973-80, 1986, and 1988. The Reagan administration chose to implement drought relief very selectively during its first term. Available measures have included the emergency disaster loan program, the economic emergency loan program, the livestock feed program, the emergency feed program, the disaster payment program, grazing and haying of conservation-use acreage, and the crop insurance program.

The disaster emergency loan program made loans available under PL 94-305 (1976) and PL 96-302 (1980) when production losses amounted to 30 percent or more, at which point FmHA could loan farmers up to 80 percent of the actual loss at an interest rate (in 1983) of 8 percent. Loans were made on the presumption that they were not available elsewhere.

The economic emergency loan program of the FmHA, authorized by PL 95-334 (1978) as amended and as directed by Kjeldahl v. Block (1983), made credit available to farmers who could not otherwise get it because of "economic stress." Secretary of Agriculture John Block refused to implement this program, for budgetary reasons, until a U.S. District Court ordered him to do so for the period from December 22, 1983, until September 30, 1984.

Under the livestock feed program, CCC was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, to donate commodities in presidentially declared disaster areas or to provide feed at reduced prices either directly or through dealers. The emergency feed program authorized the Secretary, under authority of Section 1105 of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977, as amended, to reimburse livestock and poultry producers up to 50 percent of the cost of commercially purchased feed at times when they lacked adequate supplies because of disaster. Secretary Block did not institute either of these programs because he believed that reserves might be cut to a dangerous level and that the line had to be drawn on further spending.

In the 1970s, disaster payments supplemented older loan, feed, and seed programs and greatly raised the cost of drought aid. Producers of wheat, sorghum, corn, barley, upland cotton, and rice could receive disaster payments authorized by the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973, the Rice Production Act of 1975, and the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977, as amended, if natural conditions prevented planting or reduced crops below a certain level. As a result, they had little incentive to buy crop insurance. Between 1974 and 1981, disaster payments totaled more than $3.8 billion, and fewer than 10 percent of farmers bought crop insurance. The Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 ended the disaster payment program after 1981 and greatly increased the attractiveness of crop insurance by subsidizing 30 percent of farmers' premiums. The Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 and the Food Security Act of 1985, however, authorized the Secretary to make disaster payments to producers of wheat, feed grains, cotton, and rice if they were participants in acreage-reduction programs and crop insurance either was not available to them or was insufficient to meet the emergency. Secretary Block did not implement this program during the 1983 drought.

As a result of the drought of 1986, Congress passed disaster payment legislation, PL 99-500 and PL 99-591, which applied only to the crops of that year. It was administered by the executive vice president of the Commodity Credit Corporation and carried out by State and county ASCS committees. Farmers who were prevented from planting or who had low yields as a result of unfavorable weather could apply for disaster payments. These amounted to 50 percent of the estimated crop loss multiplied by the 1986 basic county price support loan rate for most program crops or 50 percent of estimated crop lost multiplied by an established estimated

rate for nonprogram crops. Payments for cotton, sugar beets, sugarcane, and peanuts were computed by more complex formulas. The 1986 program cost $634 million.

Secretary Block, under authority of the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 and the Food Security Act of 1985, did authorize grazing and haying on wheat, feed grain, cotton, and rice land which had been taken out of production for conservation purposes.

The crop insurance program became much more attractive to farmers after the passage of legislation in the early 1980s, which eliminated most disaster payments. In 1983, the payment-in-kind program coincided with a severe drought. Secretary Block contended that the combination of that program with crop insurance provided adequate relief for a majority of farmers.

THE 1988 DROUGHT

The drought of 1988 may prove to be the second worst of the 20th Century or perhaps even the worst. Secretary Richard Lyng early recognized the danger and appointed a Drought Task Force on March 11. Congress established its own Drought Relief Task Force on June 4. Drought relief programs for 1988 have fallen into two categories: implementation of existing legislation and passage of the Disaster Assistance Act of 1988 in August. Programs set in motion include haying and grazing, meat purchase, emergency feed and emergency feed assistance, partial payments for crops which could not be planted, and disaster emergency loans. The major features of the Disaster Assistance Act are the emergency livestock assistance and the emergency crop loss programs.

On May 31, Secretary Lyng authorized haying and grazing on conservation reserve and conservation use acreage in drought-stricken areas. Sixteen days later, he opened conservation reserve program land for haying only. USDA began a "haynet" for exchange of information between those who had hay and those who needed it. As the crisis worsened, it allowed hay harvesting on reserve and set-aside acreage in nondrought areas if the hay was donated to the drought-stricken.

On June 27, in an attempt to help livestock producers, the Secretary allocated $50 million from Section 32 funds, available under the 1935 amendments to the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933, to buy beef for school lunch and domestic food assistance programs. Two weeks later, he extended purchases to include ground pork. In the meantime, Mexico had gotten a $40-million credit to buy chilled and frozen meat.

As the possible extent of the drought grew apparent, Secretary Lyng implemented the emergency feed program, authorized by Section 1105 of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977. This let livestock owners in stricken areas, who had suffered at least 40-percent feed loss, to recover as much as half the cost of replacement feed. On June 27, the Secretary made counties which were approved for this aid also eligible for the emergency feed assistance program, authorized by the Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, and known earlier as the livestock feed program. Under this program, producers could buy grain from CCC stocks at 75 percent of the basic county loan rate if they had lost 40 percent or more of their own feed production. Secretary Block had not used either of these programs during the 1983 drought.

In the case of wheat and feed grain producers who had signed up for the 1988 programs but had not been able to plant their permitted acreage because of weather, a special "0/92" provision came into play. If all conditions were fulfilled, they could receive deficiency payments on 92 percent of those acres.

USDA instructed both the Forest Service and the Cooperative Extension Service to provide farmers with as much of their specialized assistance as possible. The Soil Conservation Service provided programs in aid of water management.

As soon as counties were designated major disaster areas by the President or natural disaster areas by the Secretary, they became eligible for disaster emergency loans as authorized by PL 94-305 (1976) and PL 96-302 (1980). This program, administered by FmHA, had been used in several earlier crises. Under its provisions, a farmer who had suffered a 30-percent or greater loss could qualify for a loan of up to 80 percent of production loss and 100 percent of physical loss. The applicant, however, could not count any crops which could have been insured with FCIC but were not. The farmer-applicant also had to show that credit was not available from other sources.

By midsummer, sentiment began building in Congress for legislation going beyond programs already in place. On July 28, both Houses passed similar relief bills, and a conference committee took up the process of reconciliation. Estimated costs ran from $5 to $8 billion and the President threatened a veto. The major difference between the two versions was over livestock aid. The Senate bill would have allowed all livestock feeders to benefit; the House bill limited assistance to those who raised all or part of their own feed. Senate conferees acceded to the House plan, at a saving of $1 billion or so. After swift votes in Congress, President Reagan signed the bill on August 11.

The Disaster Assistance Act of 1988 had an estimated price tag of $3.9 billion at time of passage. USDA's annual expenditures will probably be lower than expected under normal conditions because crop loans and deficiency payments will be cut dramatically.

Section 101(a) of Title I of the law amends the Agricultural Act of 1949 and becomes Title VI of that legislation as the Emergency Livestock Feed Assistance Act of 1988 and, as such, permanent legislation. It extends further assistance to livestock producers who, if already eligible, may continue to benefit from the emergency feed and emergency feed assistance programs during the 1988 crisis. The essential features of the new law include: (1) donation of CCC feed grain stocks to those producers deemed unable to buy, (2) sale of CCC stocks to others at a price not to exceed 75 percent of the basic county loan rate during this emergency, and at 50 percent of market price in future crises, (3) reimbursement of 50 percent of transportation costs for feed grains, (4) reimbursement of not more than 50 percent of the cost of feed purchased by the producer, (5) reimbursement of 50 percent of the transportation costs for hay and forage, and (6) reimbursement of 50 percent of the cost of transporting cattle to and from adequate grazing lands. In order to benefit from this program, the livestock producer must normally grow all or part of the feed and must have an annual gross revenue of less than $2.5 million. Benefits are limited to $50,000 per person.

Section 101(b) of Title I repeals Section 421 (and amends Section 407) of the Agricultural Act of 1949, PL 86-299 (1959), and Section 1105 of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977. These were the authorizations for the emergency feed and emergency feed assistance programs. A major difference between those programs and the new one is that they required a 40-percent crop loss before aid

could be made available. All that is required from now on is for the Secretary to determine that a livestock emergency exists.

Title II, the emergency crop loss program for 1988, covers most farmers, although those who participate in the production adjustment program are favored. Disaster payments to participants in the wheat, feed grain, cotton, and rice programs, for example, are eligible to receive 65 percent of the target price set for their commodity losses between 35 and 75 percent of the total. If losses exceed 75 percent, they qualify for 90 percent of the target price. Producers of these crops who did not sign up for the production adjustment program can receive 65 percent (at the lower loss rate) and 90 percent (for losses exceeding 75 percent) of the basic county loan rate. Peanut growers are eligible for 65 (lower loss) and 90 (higher loss) percent of the price support level; tobacco producers for 65 (lower loss) and 90 (higher loss) percent of the average national loan rate for their type of tobacco; and sugarcane and sugar beet producers for 65 (lower loss) and 90 (higher loss) percent of a reasonable price as determined by the Secretary. Soybean and nonprogram crop producers can claim 65 (lower loss) and 90 (higher loss) percent of the average price of their commodity in the preceding 5 years, excluding the highest and lowest years. Producers of wheat, feed grains, cotton, rice, and soybeans may also qualify for payments if the quality of the crop harvested was reduced as a result of the drought.

Farmers who receive crop loss aid must agree to buy Federal crop insurance for the 1989 crop unless their losses run higher than 65 percent, no insurance is available to them or its premium is more than 125 percent of the 1988 premium, the premium is more than 25 percent of the benefit, or if a local committee believes it would cause the farmer hardship. Only an estimated 21 percent of farmers bought Federal crop insurance in 1988. They benefit both from insurance payments and crop loss payments within certain limits.

No farmers with gross revenues of $2 million or more can receive emergency crop loss assistance. Payments may not exceed $100,000, and any assistance received under the livestock emergency program counts toward that total.

Other features of the 1988 legislation include emergency aid for reseeding drought-damaged pastures, assistance to tree growers, encouragement for increased planting of sunflowers and soybeans in 1989, adjustment in the dairy price support program, and aid to ethanol producers. The latter two items were controversial. The administration had opposed the measure, which will increase milk support prices by 50 cents between April 1 and June 30, 1989. The same was true of the authorization for sale of low-cost corn to ethanol producers. This was left to the Secretary's discretion, and Secretary Lyng has said that he does not support it.

An important feature to be watched in future drought programs is the balance between the principles of crop insurance on the one hand and disaster payments on the other. Prior to the 1970s, even during the bleakest years of the 1930s, drought assistance came mainly in the form of loans, purchases, and subsidies. Congress created Federal crop insurance in 1938 but it did not become an important factor. Disaster payments, introduced in the 1970s, had become a significant expenditure by the end of the decade. Both the Carter and the Reagan administrations sought to eliminate the concept by making crop insurance attractive to farmers and implying that disaster payments would no longer be available for nonsubscribers. However, no more than about one-fifth of farmers have bought crop insurance in the years since 1980. Emergency legislation dealing with the droughts of 1986 and 1988 have reinforced farmers' belief that

they can count on the Government for disaster payments when push comes to shove and that those who buy crop insurance are naive. The tension between these two concepts will undoubtedly continue, and a major item for discussion in the next agricultural bill may well be whether to mandate crop insurance purchase by those who participate in commodity programs.

APPENDIX OF SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATION

Jt Res 71-112 (1930). Drought Relief Act of 1930. Authorized $45 million in loans to farmers for seed, feed, fertilizer, and fuel.

PL 73-10 (1933). Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933. Established the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, which carried out many of the drought relief programs of the 1930s.

PL 73-142 (1934). Jones-Connally Act. Established a livestock production control program which authorized purchase of cattle, sheep, and goats.

PL 73-412 (1934). Emergency Appropriations Act. Appropriated $525 million for drought relief.

PL 74-320 (1935). Amended PL 73-10. Section 32 funds have been used for domestic food purchase programs.

PL 74-461 (1936). Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act. Authorized production control through soil-conserving programs. Established the State and county farmer committees, which have played a vital role in each drought emergency.

PL 75-430 (1938). Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938. Provided the framework for production adjustment and price support programs. Chartered the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.

PL 81-38 (1949). Authorized production disaster loans from a newly established Secretary's disaster loan revolving fund.

PL 81-439 (1949). Agricultural Act of 1949. Basic agricultural legislation. Provided for such programs as emergency feed relief.

PL 81-875 (1950). Created a framework for action in case of major national catastrophes, giving the President power to declare disaster areas and establishing an emergency fund for him to draw upon.

PL 83-115 (1953). Broadened the scope of production disaster loans under PL 81-38.

PL 83-480 (1954). Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954. Section 301 amended the Agricultural Act of 1949 to make CCC stocks available for domestic use in case of natural disaster or economic hardship.

PL 86-299 (1959). Authorized sale of CCC stocks for livestock feed in emergency areas.

PL 93-86 (1973). Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973. First legislation to provide for drought disaster payments to farmers for loss of certain commodities.

PL 94-214 (1975). Rice Production Act of 1975. Extended drought disaster payments to rice growers.

PL 94-305 (1976). Delineated a disaster emergency loan program which involved FmHA and SBA but emphasized the role of the latter.

PL 95-113 (1977). Food and Agriculture Act of 1977. Reaffirmed the drought disaster payment program.

PL 95-334 (1978). Agricultural Credit Act of 1978. Authorized the economic emergency loan program.

PL 96-302 (1980). Strengthened the role of FmHA in the disaster emergency loan program.

PL 96-365 (1980). Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980. Strengthened and subsidized the crop insurance program. Eliminated drought disaster payments.

PL 97-98 (1981). Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. Reauthorized drought disaster payments for producers of wheat, feed grains, cotton, and rice but only if they were participants in the acreage-reduction program and if crop insurance either was not available to them or was insufficient to meet the emergency.

PL 99-198 (1985). Food Security Act of 1985. Renewed the drought disaster conditions of PL 97-98.

PL 99-500 and 99-591 (1986). Authorized special drought assistance including disaster payments for the 1986 crop year.

PL 100-387 (1988). Disaster Assistance Act of 1988. Broad drought relief programs including crop disaster payments for the 1988 crop year. Also, a livestock assistance program which becomes Title VI of PL 81-439 and replaces the emergency feed and emergency feed assistance programs.

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